

Message Text

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ORIGIN OES-06

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P 062300Z APR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 077087

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SENV, AS

SUBJECT: WEATHER MODIFICATION AUSTRALIA - INFORMAL TECHNICAL TALKS

1. ASSUMING THAT U.S. AND AUSTRALIAN TECHNICAL AND POLITICAL CLEARANCES ARE OBTAINED, NOAA PLANS TO SPONSOR

HURRICANE-SEEDING EXPERIMENTS IN WESTERN PACIFIC IN 1979 (PROJECT STORMFURY-AUSTRALIA) AIMED AT ATTENUATING HURRICANE IMPACTS. IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE EXPERIMENTS WOULD BE PHASED TO COINCIDE WITH SIMILAR HURRICANE-SEEDING EXPERIMENTS IN WESTERN ATLANTIC AND EASTERN PACIFIC (PROJECT STORMFURY-AMERICAS). TECHNICAL AND POLITICAL CLEARANCES, INCLUDING RESOLUTION OF LIABILITY ISSUE AND CIRCULAR 175 AUTHORIZATION, MUST ALSO BE OBTAINED FOR WESTERN HEMISPHERE EXPERIMENTS, BUT AUSTRALIAN EXPERIMENT
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COULD BE CONDUCTED INDEPENDENTLY WITH NECESSARY CLEARANCES.

2. INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP ON WEATHER MODIFICATION IS PRESENTLY REVIEWING DRAFT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROJECT STORMFURY-AUSTRALIA (COPY BEING POUCHED EMBASSY). WE ANTICIPATE NO PROBLEMS IN OBTAINING WORKING GROUP CLEARANCE SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 9.

3. MEANWHILE, NOAA WISHES TO SEND EXPERT GROUP TO AUSTRALIA TO CONDUCT PRELIMINARY, EXPLORATORY, TECHNICAL, NON-COMMITTAL TALKS WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS. GROUP WOULD BE HEADED BY DR. WILMOT HESS, DIRECTOR OF NOAA'S ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH LABORATORY (ERL) IN BOULDER AND WOULD INCLUDE ALSO MR. MERLIN WILLIAMS, ERL, DIRECTOR OF WEATHER MODIFICATION, DR. EDWARD BOWEN (METEOROLOGIST AND FORMERLY AUSTRALIA'S SCIENCE ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON), AND PERHAPS ONE ADDITIONAL EXPERT. GROUP WOULD PLAN TO DEPART APRIL 16 AND WOULD PLAN TO CONSULT WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS SOON AFTER ARRIVAL CANBERRA APRIL 19 CONCERNING INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH THEIR AUSTRALIAN COUNTERPARTS.

4. NOAA INDICATES THAT AUSTRALIAN HOST WILL BE A.H. ENNOR, SECRETARY OF DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE, CANBERRA. NOAA'S DIRECT CONTACT IS JOHN ZILLMAN, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, AUSTRALIAN WEATHER SERVICE, MELBOURNE. TENTATIVE ITINERARY OF NOAA GROUP CALLS FOR 15-DAY CIRCUIT ENCOMPASSING CANBERRA, MELBOURNE, SYDNEY, BRISBANE, TOWNSVILLE, DARWIN, LEARMOUTH, PERTH, CANBERRA. NOAA UNDERSTANDS THAT DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE WILL ARRANGE LOCAL HOTEL AND AIRLINE RESERVATIONS. PURPOSE OF VISIT TO CANBERRA IS TO ESTABLISH HEADQUARTERS CONTACTS AT DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE, COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANIZATION (CSIRO), AND MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE, ENVIRONMENT, AND TRANSPORT. IN MELBOURNE, TO CONSULT WITH BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY; IN SYDNEY WITH CSIRO, DIVISION OF CLOUD

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PHYSICS; IN BRISBANE, DARWIN, AND PERTH WITH TROPICAL CYCLONE WARNING CENTERS; AND IN TOWNSVILLE AND LEARMOUTH WITH METEOROLOGICAL OFFICES AND RAAF STATIONS. LATTER TWO FACILITIES WILL BE EXAMINED TO DETERMINE SUITABILITY FOR STAGING RESEARCH AIRCRAFT.

5. DESPITE RELATIVELY SHORT NOTICE OF NOAA VISIT DEPARTMENT SUPPORTS PURPOSE OF EXPLORATORY TALKS IN VIEW OF POTENTIAL VALUE OF HURRICANE ABATEMENT TECHNOLOGY IF IT CAN BE DEVELOPED SAFELY AND WITHOUT UNDESIRABLE ENVIRONMENTAL SIDE EFFECTS. AUSTRALIAN AUTHORITIES MOST CONCERNED WITH WEATHER AND METEOROLOGICAL ACTIVITIES ARE FULLY FAMILIAR WITH HISTORY OF U.S. WEATHER MODIFICATION EXPERIMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE IN THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE SINCE 1961. INFORMAL VISIT OUTLINED ABOVE WILL PERMIT US TO ASSESS DEGREE OF AUSTRALIAN INTEREST AND EXPERTISE IN POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT STORMFURY, WHICH DESPITE ITS TITLE INVOLVES PLANNED EXPERIMENTATION TO ATTENUATE

THE FURY OF STORMS.

6. REQUEST EMBASSY CONCURRENCE/COMMENTS.
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Message Attributes

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